

This Candidate Handbook is designed to help you understand and move successfully through the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA). You will complete four performance tasks at different stages during your teacher preparation program.

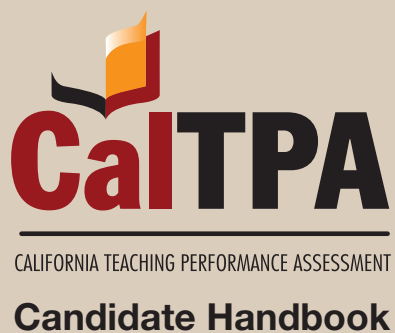
This Handbook provides an overview of the CalTPA process, an explanation of the four performance tasks, and guidance about the choices and decisions you will need to make as you complete each of the four performance tasks. Each chapter related to an individual task provide you with more in-depth information about the CalTPA, including an overview of the task itself, the Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) measured by that task, and directions for completing the task. You will also find a glossary of educational terms used in the CalTPA, a complete list of the Teaching Performance Expectations, and additional resources to help you as you form your task responses.

As you prepare for each performance task of the CalTPA, rereading the relevant chapters of this Handbook will remind you of how the task fits within the assessment as a whole, and will help prepare you to respond to each of the four tasks. For further assistance, contact your teacher preparation program.



## CHAPTER 1

# Overview of the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA)





### **Chapter 1 of the CalTPA Candidate Handbook**

Is covered by this Handbook's

Copyright © 2008 by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
1900 Capitol Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95811

All rights reserved.

All materials contained herein are protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written permission of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is covered in and by the copyright notice on the inside of the front cover of this Handbook.

## Overview of the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA)

Senate Bill 2042 (Chapter 548, Statutes of 1998) and Senate Bill 1209 (Chapter 517, Statutes of 2006) require all multiple and single subject credential candidates attending California preliminary teacher preparation programs to pass a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). This assessment is designed to give you the opportunity to develop, refine, and demonstrate your teaching knowledge, skills, and abilities during your teacher preparation program.

The CalTPA is aligned with the state-adopted academic content standards for students, as well as with state content frameworks, the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs)*. The CalTPA is part of a three-year preparation cycle of growth and development for beginning teachers that includes preliminary credential preparation as well as induction.

The California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA) incorporates four performance tasks that increase in complexity but not necessarily in difficulty. These tasks are intended to be completed as you progress through your teacher preparation program. Each teacher preparation program decides how and where each task is embedded in the program coursework and/or related program activities.

Taken as a whole, the four performance tasks will ask you to demonstrate that you know how to:

- *find out information about a given class and about specific focus students within the class such as an English learner or a student with identified special needs*
- *plan appropriate subject-specific instruction for all students in alignment with state-adopted K-12 student academic content standards and/or frameworks*
- *implement the instruction according to the lesson plans you have developed, and reflect upon the outcomes of that instruction, including evidence of student learning*
- *design and implement assessment activities appropriate to the lesson and to the learners, and use the assessment results to inform the next round of lesson planning*
- *reflect upon your own professional growth as a member of the teaching profession*

The TPA and is designed to be both formative and summative, in that the TPA process will provide you with formative feedback during each task about your performance, and, at the conclusion of the four tasks, will serve as a summative criterion for recommendation for the teaching credential.

All multiple and single subject teacher candidates must successfully complete the TPA in order to be recommended for a preliminary teaching credential. After receiving your preliminary credential, and upon employment in a teaching position, you will participate in an approved induction program leading to a clear credential. The results of the CalTPA will help inform your Individual Induction Plan (IIP), an important basis for the support you will receive during the induction period.

All materials and information necessary for you to complete the CalTPA are available and are public. You will have the opportunity to review the four tasks and their scoring rubrics before you begin the

## CalTPA OVERVIEW

assessment. The formative aspect of the CalTPA system allows you to confer with, collaborate with, and receive support from both instructors and peers while preparing for the CalTPA. To complete the assessment, however, you must submit an individual response to each task that represents your own unaided work.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), along with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and experienced California educators, developed the CalTPA to measure the knowledge, skills and abilities needed by a beginning teacher. It is important that you become familiar with California's *Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs)* that describe what beginning California teachers need to know and be able to do before being recommended for a preliminary credential. Your teacher preparation program will introduce you to the TPEs and will give you multiple opportunities to become familiar with them. The TPEs are organized into six domains, as shown below. The complete text of the TPEs is provided in Appendix A and can also be downloaded from [www.ctc.ca.gov](http://www.ctc.ca.gov).

You should review the relevant TPEs addressed by a specific CalTPA task both before you begin and again periodically as you prepare your responses to the task. Aspects of specific TPEs measured in each task are listed in the directions for the task. You will note that only TPE 12, which pertains to professional, legal, and ethical obligations, is not measured within the CalTPA. TPE 12 will be measured in other ways by your teacher preparation program.

### **California's *Teaching Performance Expectations* At A Glance** (with salient features)

#### **A. Making Subject Matter Comprehensible to Students**

##### **TPE 1 – Specific Pedagogical Skills for Subject Matter Instruction**

- a. Subject-Specific Pedagogical Skills for Multiple Subject Teaching Assignments
  - *Understanding the state-adopted academic content standards*
  - *Understanding how to teach the subject matter in the standards*
  - *Planning instruction that addresses the standards*
  - *Demonstrating the ability to teach to the standards*
- b. Subject-Specific Pedagogical Skills for Single Subject Teaching Assignments
  - *Understanding the state-adopted academic content standards*
  - *Understanding how to teach the subject matter in the standards*
  - *Planning instruction that addresses the standards*
  - *Demonstrating the ability to teach to the standards*

**B. Assessing Student Learning****TPE 2 – Monitoring Student Learning During Instruction**

- *Determining student progress toward achieving the state-adopted academic content standards*
- *Using instructional strategies and techniques to support students' learning*

**TPE 3 – Interpretation and Use of Assessments**

- *Understanding a range of assessments*
- *Using and interpreting a range of assessments*
- *Giving feedback on assessment results*

**C. Engaging and Supporting Students in Learning****TPE 4 – Making Content Accessible**

- *Addressing state-adopted academic content standards*
- *Prioritizing and sequencing content*
- *Selecting and using various instructional strategies, activities, and resources to facilitate student learning*

**TPE 5 – Student Engagement**

- *Understanding of academic learning goals*
- *Ensuring active and equitable participation*
- *Monitoring student progress and extending student thinking*

**TPE 6 Developmentally Appropriate Teaching Practices**

- a. Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Grades K-3
  - *Understanding important characteristics of the learners*
  - *Designing instructional activities*
  - *Providing developmentally appropriate educational experiences*
- b. Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Grades 4-8
  - *Understanding important characteristics of the learners*
  - *Designing instructional activities*
  - *Providing developmentally appropriate educational experiences*
- c. Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Grades 9-12
  - *Understanding important characteristics of the learners*
  - *Designing instructional activities*
  - *Providing developmentally appropriate educational experiences*

## CalTPA OVERVIEW

### TPE 7 – Teaching English Learners

- *Understanding and applying theories, principles, and instructional practices for English Language Development*
- *Understanding how to adapt instructional practices to provide access to the state-adopted student content standards*
- *Drawing upon student backgrounds and language abilities to provide differentiated instruction*

## D. Planning Instruction and Designing Learning Experiences for Students

### TPE 8 – Learning about Students

- *Understanding child and adolescent development*
- *Understanding how to learn about students*
- *Using methods to learn about students*
- *Connecting student information to learning*

### TPE 9 – Instructional Planning

- *Establishing academic learning goals*
- *Connecting academic content to the students' backgrounds, needs, and abilities*
- *Selecting strategies/activities/materials/resources*

## E. Creating and Maintaining Effective Environments for Student Learning

### TPE 10 – Instructional Time

- *Allocating instructional time*
- *Managing instructional time*

### TPE 11 – Social Environment

- *Understanding the importance of the social environment*
- *Establishing a positive environment for learning*
- *Maintaining a positive environment for learning*

## F. Developing as a Professional Educator

### TPE 12 – Professional, Legal, and Ethical Obligations

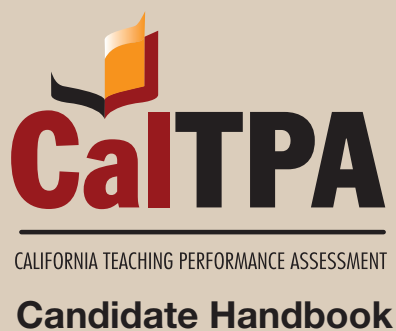
- *Taking responsibility for student academic learning outcomes*
- *Knowing and applying professional and ethical obligations*
- *Knowing and applying legal obligations*

### TPE 13 – Professional Growth

- *Evaluating teaching practices and subject matter knowledge*
- *Using reflection and feedback to improve teaching practice and subject matter knowledge*

## CHAPTER 2

### Overview of the Four CalTPA Tasks and the Task Directions





## **Chapter 2 of the CalTPA Candidate Handbook**

Is covered by this Handbook's

Copyright © 2008 by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
1900 Capitol Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95811

All rights reserved.

All materials contained herein are protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written permission of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content. Any redistribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is covered in and by the copyright notice on the inside of the front cover of this Handbook.

## Overview of the Four CalTPA Tasks and the Task Directions

Each of the four CalTPA tasks is designed to measure aspects of the TPEs and to reflect what beginning teachers should know and be able to do before receiving a preliminary credential. The CTC, Educational Testing Service, and professional teacher educators from California teacher preparation programs designed and tested pilot versions of the four performance tasks to ensure that the final CalTPA tasks are fair and equitable for all preliminary credential candidates.

### A. The Tasks

#### **The *Subject-Specific Pedagogy* Task**

In this task, you will demonstrate your knowledge of principles of content-specific developmentally-appropriate pedagogy. You will complete the version of this task corresponding to the credential for which you are preparing.

Each Subject-Specific Pedagogy task version contains four case studies. The case studies address subject-specific and developmentally-appropriate pedagogy, assessment practices, adaptation of content for English learners, and adaptation of content for students with special needs. You will respond in writing to each of the four case studies and submit your response to your teacher preparation program as directed by your program. This task does not require interaction with actual K-12 students.

#### **The *Designing Instruction* Task**

In this task, you will be working with K-12 students as you demonstrate your ability to learn important details about a classroom of students, including focusing on an English learner and a student who presents a different instructional challenge. You will plan instruction that is shaped by and addresses those student characteristics, and you will demonstrate your ability to connect learning about students to your instructional planning. You will also reflect on your planning process and its outcomes. You will submit your completed response and any supporting artifacts and/or documentation to your teacher preparation program as directed by your program.

#### **The *Assessing Learning* Task**

In this task, you will demonstrate your ability to select a unit of study, identify related learning goals, and plan and implement standards-based, developmentally-appropriate student assessment activities for a group of students. In addition, you will demonstrate your ability to assess student learning, diagnose student needs based on student responses to the assessment activity, and show, after reflection, how you would apply this information to your future planning for these students.

Within the task, you will also demonstrate your ability to make assessment adaptations for two focus students: an English learner and a student with identified special needs. You will score, review, and analyze evidence of student learning and you will reflect on the assessment implications of this evidence. You will submit to your teacher preparation program as directed by your program all of the following: your completed response, copies of the assessment(s), selected student assessment responses, and scoring scales, rubrics, and/or scoring guides as appropriate to the content area.

## GENERAL TASK DIRECTIONS

### **The Culminating Teaching Experience Task**

In this task you will demonstrate your ability to design a lesson based on state-adopted academic content standards for students and/or frameworks, and then implement that lesson while making appropriate use of class time and instructional resources, meeting the differing needs of individuals within the class, managing instruction and student interaction, assessing student learning, and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson. In addition, you will demonstrate your ability to make lesson adaptations for two focus students, to analyze evidence of student learning, and to reflect upon your instruction. The two focus students will be an English learner and a student who presents a different instructional challenge.

You will submit to your teacher preparation program as directed by your program your completed response, which includes your reflection upon the lesson and on student learning, a video of the lesson you taught, instructional and/or assessment artifacts and/or documentation, and samples of student work.

## **B. Directions for the Four CalTPA Performance Tasks**

Each performance task has a specific set of directions. Each set of directions is organized to convey the information you need along with identifying the important decisions you have to make in order to submit a succinct and thoughtful response to the tasks. Task directions are organized as follows:

### **1. What is Being Measured**

As you begin a task, you will need to know what is being measured and what you will be asked to do. The “What Is Being Measured” section in each set of task directions specifies which TPEs are addressed in the task. Read the complete text for each specified TPE before you begin and review the TPEs again periodically as you prepare your response. You should also review the task-specific scoring rubrics provided within the task directions. The scoring rubrics are based on the TPEs addressed by each task, organized by domains.

### **2. Completing Your Task Response**

Each task is organized as a sequence of steps that represent key ideas. You will find these key ideas in the “Completing Your Response” section in each set of task directions. A checklist summarizes the key activities you need to complete along with what you might consider and reflect upon as you develop your responses. The information will help you to think about the larger ideas represented in the task and to track your progress through the task.

As you begin thinking about lesson selection and lesson development, choosing the simplest lesson or working with only the highest-achieving students may not necessarily be to your advantage. Your choices should take into account the factors that will maximize your opportunity to demonstrate the range of your knowledge, skills and abilities as a teacher. In the set of directions for each performance task, important choices will be identified along with guidance about what you should consider before making your decision(s). The focus of each task is on your teaching practice, not on the students’ level of performance.

### 3. How Your Response is Scored

The suggestions in this section of the directions help you address the scoring criteria. Each performance task measures specific aspects of several Teaching Performance Expectations. Collectively, the four tasks as a whole measure all of the six domains of the TPEs. Task-specific rubrics related to the TPEs covered within a particular task are included as a part of the task directions. You should read the task-specific rubric as well as the relevant TPEs for each task before you begin and again periodically as you prepare your response.

The scoring rubrics have four performance score levels ranging from a low of “1” to a high of “4.” You should carefully review the scoring rubrics so that you understand what each level of performance on the task looks like in practice. Your teacher preparation program will inform you of the minimum passing score established by your program (see Chapter 8 of this Handbook for program-specific information).

CalTPA assessors are carefully trained to apply the scoring rubric to your response. Your response will be judged on the extent to which it provides clear, consistent, and convincing evidence of your teaching knowledge, skills, and abilities for those domains. Keep in mind that each task response is scored independently of your responses to the other tasks, and responses to different tasks may not be scored by the same assessor.

### 4. Making Choices (for the *Designing Instruction, Assessing Learning, and Culminating Teaching Experience Tasks*)

Once you understand what is being measured and are familiar with what you need to do to complete your response, you will have to make some important choices. The four inter-related yet separate tasks of the CalTPA are sequenced, and increase in complexity as you move through them. As the tasks increase in complexity, there are more choices and decisions to make about how to respond to the prompts.

With the exception of the Subject-Specific Pedagogy task, you will be working with K-12 students in order to complete the tasks. You will use actual student data that you collect and you will make instructional decisions based on that information along with your knowledge of appropriate instructional practices for that content area/grade level as well as for the particular students in the class. You will need to choose different focus students for the various CalTPA tasks and you will be asked to address the needs of a range of learners including an English learner, a student with identified special needs, and a student who presents a different instructional challenge.

Information about “Making Choices” in each set of directions identifies the important choices for the task and helps you to think about what to consider as you make those choices.

If you are a Multiple Subject Preliminary Credential candidate, you should select a different core curriculum area (i.e., English/language arts, mathematics, history/social science or science) as the content area for the Designing Instruction, Assessing Learning, and Culminating Teaching Experience tasks. Your teacher preparation program will provide guidance in selecting the specific content areas for each of these three tasks (see Chapter 8 of this Handbook for program-specific information).

## GENERAL TASK DIRECTIONS

If you are a Single Subject Preliminary Credential candidate, you will select three different topics within your content area and three different classrooms of students, one for each task.

When selecting focus students, all candidates, whether Multiple or Single Subject, must select different focus students for each of the CalTPA tasks.

### 5. Video of the Lesson (*Culminating Teaching Experience Task Only*)

This section of the task directions will provide information about video processes and student/adult release forms.

## C. Organizing Your Responses to Each Performance Task

### 1. Constructing a High Quality Response

Teaching is complex and involves the interplay of information about student characteristics, subject matter, teaching pedagogy, and resources. The tasks have been organized into steps to assist you in moving sequentially through the various task activities.

It is important to remember that the only information available to assessors is what you provide in your response to the questions of each task, instructional artifacts and/or documentation, including student work samples, and the video in the Culminating Teaching Experience task. Therefore, you should read each task prompt carefully and respond fully.

### 2. Preparing Your Written Responses

Throughout the assessment process, you will be asked to describe, analyze, explain, and/or reflect. It is essential to preparing your written responses to each task that you understand the difference between *descriptive writing* and *analytical writing*. This brief review is included to assist you in thinking about constructing your response to the task questions in order to fully present your understanding and reflection about your teaching practice.

***Descriptive writing:*** A “description” is a retelling of a situation or event. It is meant to “set the scene” for assessors. A descriptive response should be logically ordered and detailed enough to allow an assessor to have a basic sense of what you will do, who your students are, and/or your specific situation. The information should include enough detail for a reader to see, as you see, whatever is described, but there should not be so much detail as to overwhelm an assessor with information. When you read a prompt that asks you to describe, state, or list, or that asks “what” or “which”, those words are a cue for a descriptive response. Your description should be clear and detailed enough to allow someone who is not familiar with your class to visualize and understand what you are describing.

***Analytical writing:*** Analysis is grounded in concrete evidence and deals with reasons, rationales, and interpretations of data and information. An analytic response shows the assessor the thought processes that you used to arrive at your decision(s) along with the information and data that you considered.

*Reflection* is also analysis but is focused on self-analysis. Reflection in the CalTPA is a structured thought process that involves thinking about a past instructional experience and/or about future practice. This type of thinking allows you to consider other possibilities in light of your experience and collected evidence. If you had an opportunity to re-teach or to modify instruction for a future lesson, what would you do the same, what might you do differently, or not do at all? In the CalTPA, reflection is a focused analysis of one's teaching practice.

When responding to an analysis or reflection prompt, the focus of your response is on **why**. Questions asking **how**, **in what ways**, or **why** require analysis. Giving your reason, rationale, or interpretation explains why you made certain decisions or drew certain conclusions. In order for an assessor to understand your reasoning or interpretation, he or she must also know what evidence you considered and must have access to that same evidence. For example, if you base your analysis on the results of a lesson, it is not sufficient to say, "The lesson was successful." The evidence that you considered in drawing that conclusion, such as a student work sample(s) or test results, must be available to the assessor along with your analysis and interpretation of that evidence. Your analysis should be backed up with specific evidence or examples explaining how they influenced your understanding.

You should respond to each task step in sequential order. As you complete a step, you may refer to your responses in previous steps. Each step should build on the ones before.

### 3. Anonymity of CalTPA Artifacts and Evidence

In all of the materials you submit with your task responses such as assessment and instructional artifacts, student work, and class video, you must refer to yourself as well as to other persons in a way that protects each person's anonymity. This means that **your written materials, student work samples, and instructional artifacts should not show the name of any person**. Exceptions include **Permission Forms**, which must contain full names and full signatures. **All release forms must be submitted with the task responses**. Make a copy of the release forms for your records.

The following section provides guidelines about how to refer to people, institutions, and places in your task responses, student work samples, and instructional artifacts. If you refer to:

#### **Yourself:**

Be sure that your name is removed from student work and from instructional artifacts or documentation.

#### **Children or Students**

Refer to the students by assigning them a number. Example: "Student 1."

#### **Parents or Legal Guardians**

Refer to these adults by noting the relationship to the student. Example: "Student 1's mother." The same kind of anonymity should be used for parents and legal guardians as for students.

## GENERAL TASK DIRECTIONS

### **Other Teachers, School Employees, Principals, Administrators, or Supervisors**

Use “the principal” or “a colleague” when referring to the person. For example, “A colleague, one of the fourth grade teachers...”

### **Your Professional Preparation Program, School District, or Facility Name**

Do not identify the name of your professional preparation program. When referring to school districts or to schools, identify only the school level. Do not identify the school name or location. Example: “My elementary school site.”